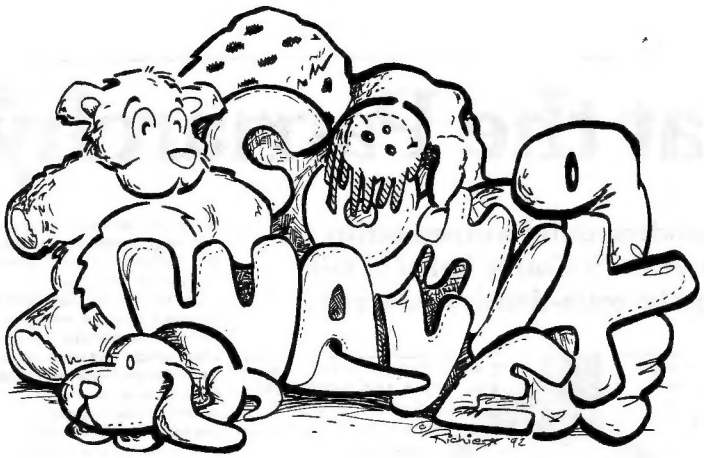

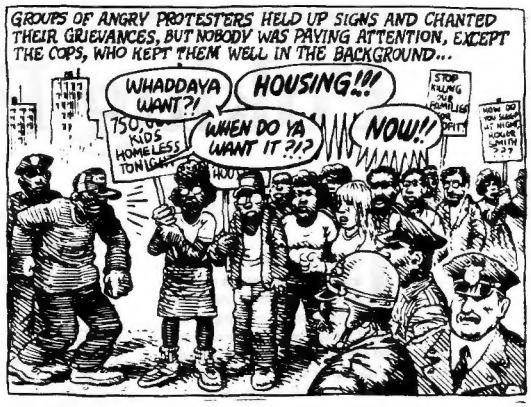
GROUPS OF ANGRY PROTESTERS HELD UP SIGNS AND CHANTED THEIR GRIEVANCES, BUT NOBODY WAS PAYING ATTENTION, EXCEPT THE COPS, WHO KEPT THEM WELL IN THE BACKGROUND...
WHADDAYA WANT?!
HOUSING!!!
750,000 KIDS HOMELESS TONIGHT
WHEN DO YA WANT IT?!?
NOW!!
STOP KILLING THE FAMILIES
HOW DO YOU SLEEP AT NIGHT KNOWING YOUR SYSTEM IS...?!?

FROM ZOOT TO LOOT

Across the top, parallel with the frame, he had drawn the burning city, a great bonfire of architectural styles, ranging from Egyptian to Cape Cod colonial. Through the center, winding from left to right, was a long hill street and down it, spilling into the middle foreground, came the mob carrying baseball bats and torches. For the faces of its members, he was using innumerable sketches he had made of the people who come to California to die; the cultists of all sorts, economic as well as religious, the wave, airplane, funeral and preview watchers--all those poor devils who can only be stirred by the promise of miracles and then only to violence. A super "Dr. Know-All Pierce-All" had made the necessary promise and they were marching behind his banner in a great united front of screwballs and screwboxes to purify the land. No longer bored, they sang and danced jo yously in the red light of the flames. In the foreground, men and women fled wildly before the vanguard of the crusading mob.

-Tod Hackett, describing his painting, *The Burning of Los Angeles*, in Nathanael West's **The Day of the Locust**, 1939.

"Where did you get that suit?"
"I looted it."

The local Berkeley stores are still on guard this week in the wake of the systematic looting that followed that amazing trial in Simi Valley. Comics and Comix has a store right in the heart of Telegraph Avenue, a street of boarded up storefronts and uptight clerks. What has happened since the People's Park demonstrations a few months back is storekeepers have started boarding up their windows in advance so that anyone attacking them will have nothing to break. Local glass companies have made a ton of money the past couple of decades. And it's not a good atmosphere. You walk down the street and look in the door and there's a lone paranoid clerk staring back at you. Who wants to sit in a boarded up coffee shop? Not me. When I go up there, I like to sit and look out the window at the people passing by. Some of the stores may decide to go the route the Bank of America took back in the sixties. They got so tired of broken windows they just bricked up the building. On the other hand one of the guys who got rich off used records is building himself a monument on the corner of Telegraph and Durant where the old UC Corner used to be. Rasputin's will be a three story building with glass windows all around. There's a guy with nerve or confidence or a signed contract he couldn't break.

Does anyone really doubt that the looting that has started to take place in the wake of social protest meetings and demonstrations is organized? Or that the items looted are chosen for both their monetary and status value? *I love the fact that the people who pay for the repetitive ads on prime time know full well that the ads condition people to need and want and buy or steal the product, yet the same power brokers will argue that repetitive violence does not condition people to be more violent in their behavior.* Can't you see these guys sitting in the board rooms in Beverly Hills and Manhattan watching the action in Los Angeles and saying, hey, look at those guys stealing OUR products. All the hype for sports products has paid off, because the kids don't even steal stuff that isn't heavily advertised. Sports gear has been adapted by many gangs these days and you have to be careful if you're just a casual fan. Around here you can get mugged for your Raiders jacket or cap. It happens on the high school playgrounds.

I like all this bullshit about race, because that's not what's going on at all. Whenever we have a "riot" around Berkeley, people come here from Martinez, Hayward, and Walnut Creek to get in on the action; i. e., to shoplift some sneakers and jeans and maybe a boom box. Most of these folks are white, and what it's about is the loot, not race. Many of the suburban kids who commute to Berkeley for these smash and grab parties have more high tech toys and clothes than they could wear in a lifetime. They do it for the excitement, the old adrenal rush. It's poor people and marginally employed people who are getting the dirty end of the stick these days and those people are of all races. The rich have a vested interest in hyping the idea that it's black vs white or black vs Asian. Divide and conquer. It works. Being white isn't going to keep you from getting your ass kicked by the police if you happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. If you think it is, talk to some of the people who were involved with People's Park this past couple of years.

What it all amounts to is that a lot of people are pissed off and tired of being insulted by establishment television. They're tired of being put down as *minority* or *underclass* or some other pejorative, tired of being shown episodes of the Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous where people live high on the booty stolen by their ancestors while the majority of the people alive in the world right now are living in shit.

Ye Olde Crumb is back with **HUP 4**. More fun and talk and misogyny and other good stuff. Crumb has even drawn himself as a dartboard on the back cover so the feminist with a beef can get satisfaction. $2.95 at your local tienda.

YOU MUST BE SICK TO DEATH OF PEOPLE ALWAYS WANTING TO BARE THEIR SOULS TO YOU EVERY MINUTE, HUH?!
WELL, NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, I—
SCRONK BUZZ

MAYBE I'M JUST WEAK... I CAN'T TAKE IT... I WANT A BIG MOMMY TO TAKE CARE OF ME... AN OMNIPOTENT SOURCE OF SOLACE AND COMFORT.
EVVATHANG GONE BE JES' FINE NOW, HONEY CHILE..
MMM... SING ME A GOSPEL HYMN, MAMMY!
HIDE ME OVER IN TH' ROCK OF AGES, CLEFT FOR ME, CLEFT FOR ME..
MAN, THESE BIG TITTIES ARE FIRM!

AND THE WOMEN—OH LORD SAVE ME—THE WOMEN WERE TRULY TERRIFYING, WITH ALL THEIR "GLAMOUR" THEIR PREDATORY EYES, THEIR CRUEL, LIPSTICKED MOUTHS... EEK!

CLAY GEERDES' **COMIX WAVE** 122
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Poking Fun at the Patriarchy

BY HILLARY FIELDING

A vanguard of underground women artists get together at Berkeley's Comic Relief to talk about subverting the male-dominated scene.

It's 1992, you're graduating, and it's the worst job market in years. Imagine a career based on self-expression, relating to the world what's really on your mind, and not being afraid of an authoritarian reprimand by your boss. Right now there is a group of women, all over the country, doing just that. These women are busy, leaning over their drawing boards, delivering their innermost thoughts and inventions via pen and ink.

Meet M.K. Brown, Mary Fleener, Phoebe Gloeckner, Krystine Kryttre, Carol Lay, Caryn Leschen, Diane Noomin and Carol Tyler; some of the women included in the recently published Penguin compilation, *Twisted Sisters, A Collection of Bad Girl Art.*

It was a peculiarly hot spring Saturday as I sweated my way into Comic Relief, Berkeley's foremost seller of intriguing comic books. The artists appeared wearing a variety of attire; from bright dresses and tops to faded T-shirts and jeans, and some unique colorful jewelry which included sparkling plastic beads and Tibetan smiling skulls. There was a lot of curly hair, both blonde and brown, and it made me think of what my kinky-haired friend had wondered about years ago: "Do weirdos grow that kind of hair out of their heads because of the bizarre thoughts they think?" The crowd consisted of people in shorts, black rags, faded things, and a few strange suits.

These women are in the vanguard of the women's underground comics movement. Diane Noomin, the editrix for the book project, responds to the incident in a Southern printing plant which refused to print the book for Penguin, USA.

"It's not remotely pornography, but these people are very threatened by it. And I think it's because women are doing it. Women demystifying romance and sex is scary," she said. Penguin apologized, found another printer and increased the print run.

Brash and brainy, explicit, honest, gooey, gloppy and explosive, these women's comic art offers an alternative to most male-produced comics which usually present sexist images of big-breasted women, violent themes and superhero fantasy which is meant to entertain hormone-crazed teenage boys. Most women artists focus on scenes from personal experience twisted into individual styles, stretched out into fantasy and snapped back into harsh and tragic memories. Women's comic art expresses irony, pain, absurdity, drama, as well as unadulterated foolishnesss.

Unpretentious, warm and direct, Phoebe Gloeckner works as a medical illustrator yet hopes to become a full-time comic artist. Her mother unsuccessfully hid underground comics from the wide-eyed girl, and drawing comics was "a way to express my anti-social tendencies that was more acceptable than some of the other typical teenage things." Included in *Twisted Sisters* is a very detailed drawing of a little girl's fantasy set in the woods about a series of imaginary little men (future husbands) who physically and emotionally abuse her. The girl retaliates by kicking each of them out of the fantasy. The story is about Gloeckner's mother's actual experience.

MARCY HONEY, GET REAL!! YOU'VE GOT THE MRS. ROBINSON SYNDROME IN SPADES!!! WAKE UP TOOTS... IT'S TIME TO BROADEN YOUR HORIZONS!!
IT'S HARD TO BE A TEEN TODAY GALS... IT'S A ZOO OUT THERE! MY TIFFANY'S STEADY, SCOTT, GOT STABBED RIGHT IN THE HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA, BY A KID FROM A RIVAL FRAT!
GUESS WHAT CRYSTAL'S BOYFRIEND WANTS MORE THAN ANYTHING IN THE WHOLE WORLD?? TO BE A ...LESBIAN!!
RING
THIS IS MS. BLISS AT MACYS. MRS. GLITZ... WE NEED TO VERIFY THAT A CRYSTAL GLITZ HAS YOUR PERMISSION TO CHARGE 200 TWENTY-FIVE DOLLAR GIFT CERTIFICATES TO YOUR ACCOUNT
CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING, HONEY... DO I SOUND LIKE SOME KIND OF A NUT CASE?! AT THIS POINT SHE'S LUCKY TO HAVE PERMISSION TO EXIST ON THIS PLANET!!
HOW COULD YOU CRYSTAL?! WHAT COULD BE SO IMPORTANT THAT YOU'D STEAL FROM YOUR OWN MOTHER?!!
SOB... I TOLD YOU I WAS SORRY, MOM!
YOU'RE GOING TO BE MUCH SORRIER, TOOTS!
HARDY FARM
BIG D
SWAMP ZOMBIES
SOCIAL DISTORTION
BLOODSISTER
ALL RIGHT!! I'LL TELL YOU... THE MONEY WAS FOR PLATO'S SEX-CHANGE OPERATION!!
UT
HE CHILLS
SLOPPY SECONDS
O-posit I V E

"Life in the Bagel Belt with Didi Glitz" by Diane Noomin.

Krystine Kryttre, tall and soft-spoken, comments that producing her art has kept her "out of jail." Her dark scratchboard images fly off the page at obtuse angles in a crescendo of jagged, effusive, and joyful images — existential concerns meets horror story explications.

The women agree that drawing comics is a cathartic activity, and necessary to their survival and growth as individuals. Women in society today are so carefully inspected. The size and shape of our bodies, our features, hair and skin color; intelligence, emotions and accomplishments are scrutinized constantly by the media, penetrating everyone with a message that perpetuates an image of woman-as-object.

Carol Lay's Tarzan story of a white heiress who returns to the Western world with extensive face-shaping; orphaned and raised by an African tribe, reflects Lay's experience in L.A. "I wasn't really trying to be political, I was working out of emotion and it turned out to be a social comment. I live in L.A., and beauty is a premium there. If you're kind of average looking or just normal, people call you a dog or pig. In general, men are insensitive to women as just people. It's hard to get over."

'It's not remotely pornography, but these people are very threatened by it.' —Diane Noomin

Carol Tyler is an artist who went to college for art during the male-dominated late 60s abstract expressionist period in America and finally decided that she wanted to draw a table or a figure and put it in her paintings. Comic art gave her the opportunity to create with figures and narrative.

"This is important," she said. "Not who was the first guy on the moon. This event that happened, that I witnessed, that's the most important thing to me. And it seems like nobody wants to hear that. They don't care; the guys, the world at large; I get a chance to slow it down and be as bold and as clear as I can about that issue that just gets completely overlooked by the grinding humanity machine; I have to turn to comics."

Creatrix of "Didi Glitz," Diane Noomin's, articulate, persistent, no-bullshit-allowed alter-ego offers a feminist approach which includes the foibles and foolishness of both sexes and ends up with bold statements about modern life. Didi has evolved from the first issue of *Twisted Sisters* (now a collector's item) in 1976 along with Aline Cominsky-Crumb's dolorous, sardonic slice of life autobiographical comics. Didi has raised a daughter, dated a lot of dumb guys, hosted home sex-toy soirees, enrolled in a make-over make-believe clinic, and tried a relationship with another woman. She's fierce, frenetic, sophisticated, self-indulgent, witty, neurotic, sexy and adventurous. Noomin's character has become so life-like that, she says, "I've gotten six phone calls in the last few days from the magazine I'm working for, asking if there's a real Didi who might sue for libel."

The Twisted Sisters, now in their 30s and 40s, refer to their experiences in the working world. Most of them have had to — and some still do — work lousy jobs to pay the rent. M.K. Brown, one of the more fortunate artists, submitted work to *National Lampoon* in the early 1970s. They bought everything she had and have kept her on staff for the past 20 years. She fit in well with their satirical, witty approach. She has also been published in *Mother Jones, Atlantic,* and underground rags like *Arcade.* Brown has published children's books and produced animation bumpers for "The Tracy Ullman Show" in 1987. She claims she hasn't experienced sexism in the work place and enjoyed many opportunities as a cartoonist.

Trina Robbins, local underground cartoonist and women comics historian, has worked on such above-ground projects as *Wonder Woman,* and regrets that some publishers of underground comics have a "failure mentality" and don't print enough or pay enough.

Caryn Leschen turns to fantasy to cope with her everyday experience as a retail worker in a Noe Valley gift shop. Her spirited autobiographical stories contain dreams and sorrows of a "Jewish girl" illustrator. Mary Fleener worked as a musician in clubs and now as a cubist-inspired cartoonist who writes about the drug world as well as giant-slug-terror in the kitchen at night. In the fall, Fantagraphics will publish Carol Ann Tyler's *The Job Thing,* a collection of her comics about shitty jobs.

So, if you can't imagine spending your life in front of a test tube creating biological mutations or sitting at a computer punching numbers, you might consider this: Everyone needs a challenge and a guffaw in their lives; especially in these times of overwhelming technology and social deterioration. It doesn't look easy, but the personal satisfaction just may be worth it.

Don't miss the last two days of The Cartoon Art Museum's exhibit: "Broad Humor; The Art of Women Cartoonists Past, Present and Future." It's located at 665 3rd Street in San Francisco. Call (415) 546-9481.